

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
Building II – Suite 204
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

For many law students, spending a summer working with New York's most vulnerable children and families is an unattainable dream. Thanks to Equal Justice America, I was able to do just that during the ten weeks I spent with New York's Lawyers for Children.

During those ten weeks, I worked alongside attorneys and social workers who represent children in foster care cases as well as high conflict custody cases. These children are experiencing the most tumultuous time of their lives – their parents are getting divorced or may not be able to care for them at all. They may be changing homes and schools, seeing a multitude of therapists and service providers, and experiencing or recovering from trauma.

Having their own lawyer during this time must then feel pretty special. Countless times, I watched my supervisors explain this news to new clients and watched kids light up when they realized this adult was there solely for them. They couldn't believe it –this person's entire job is to advocate for exactly what they want! I could watch the weight visibly lift from those tiny shoulders.

I know Bobby* was particularly comforted by having an attorney advocate on his behalf. Bobby had a tumultuous relationship with his father, who made him feel threatened and unsafe, for years. As he approached his teenage years and after many failed attempts at family therapy, Bobby decided he was not comfortable having contact with his father any longer. This was a difficult decision and he turned to his LFC lawyer and social worker for help. They confidentially counseled him through his choice, and then went into court to fight for what Bobby wanted. Because of his expert advocates, Bobby was able to make a safe and informed choice for himself and he had the power to ask the court to recognize that choice.

Working with Bobby and his LFC staff showed me exactly what type of lawyer I want to be: a lawyer that looks out for the most vulnerable clients and empowers them to participate fully in the legal process. Lawyers can do so much good in this world when they look out for and lift up others. Bobby taught me that.

Sincerely,

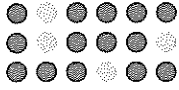
Gillian Schaps
Harvard Law School, Class of 2018

*Bobby's name has been changed in order to protect his confidentiality.

LawyersForChildren

Protecting Rights. Changing Lives.

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Dear Mr. Ruben,

Gillian's tasks this summer included shadowing numerous court hearings and providing notes and updates regarding those hearings. She also met with clients in court, at our office, and in the community, traveling to private homes, group homes, and a Residential Treatment Facility. When new questions arose in our cases, Gillian helped research their legal foundations and brainstorm creative applications of case law. Most importantly, she was an additional team member for our child-clients—there to help them feel at ease while a settlement was negotiated, coordinate outfits for an upcoming job interview, or lend an ear while they told their story.

Gillian is very sweet and very smart. She came to the internship with a lot of experience in child welfare and child custody, and understood a lot of the legal, psychological, and ethical issues we face with our clients and their families on a daily basis. Whenever we interacted with clients she was completely appropriate and tailored her discussions to their age level. She's also a great writer and has a keen ability to analyze statutes/case law/regulations in pursuit of our clients' interests. She was interested in experiencing everything she could (Staten Island Family Court, an RTC, working on all types of cases, meeting with clients, legal writing, investigations, etc.). She tried to make the most out of her internship. When I gave her a legal issue to research, I knew what she would wind up sending me was accurate, and knew how thoroughly she had vetted the validity of the case law she had found. I believe Gillian will go into family law at some point, and I think she will become a fantastic lawyer.

Sincerely,
Laura Daly, Esq.